Boulder On

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/58413856.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	M/M, Other
Fandom:	Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling
Relationship:	Harry Potter/Tom Riddle | Voldemort
Characters:	Harry Potter, Tom Riddle | Voldemort
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Rocks, Tom is an old rock, and Harry is bothering him, Crack Treated Seriously, Existentialism, Fluff, Humor, Fanged Fated Fest 2024
Language:	English
Series:	Part 16 of HP Shorts: Under 10k
Collections:	Fanged Fated Fest 2024
Stats:	Published: 2024-11-01 Words: 1,000 Chapters: 1/1

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by lumosatnight

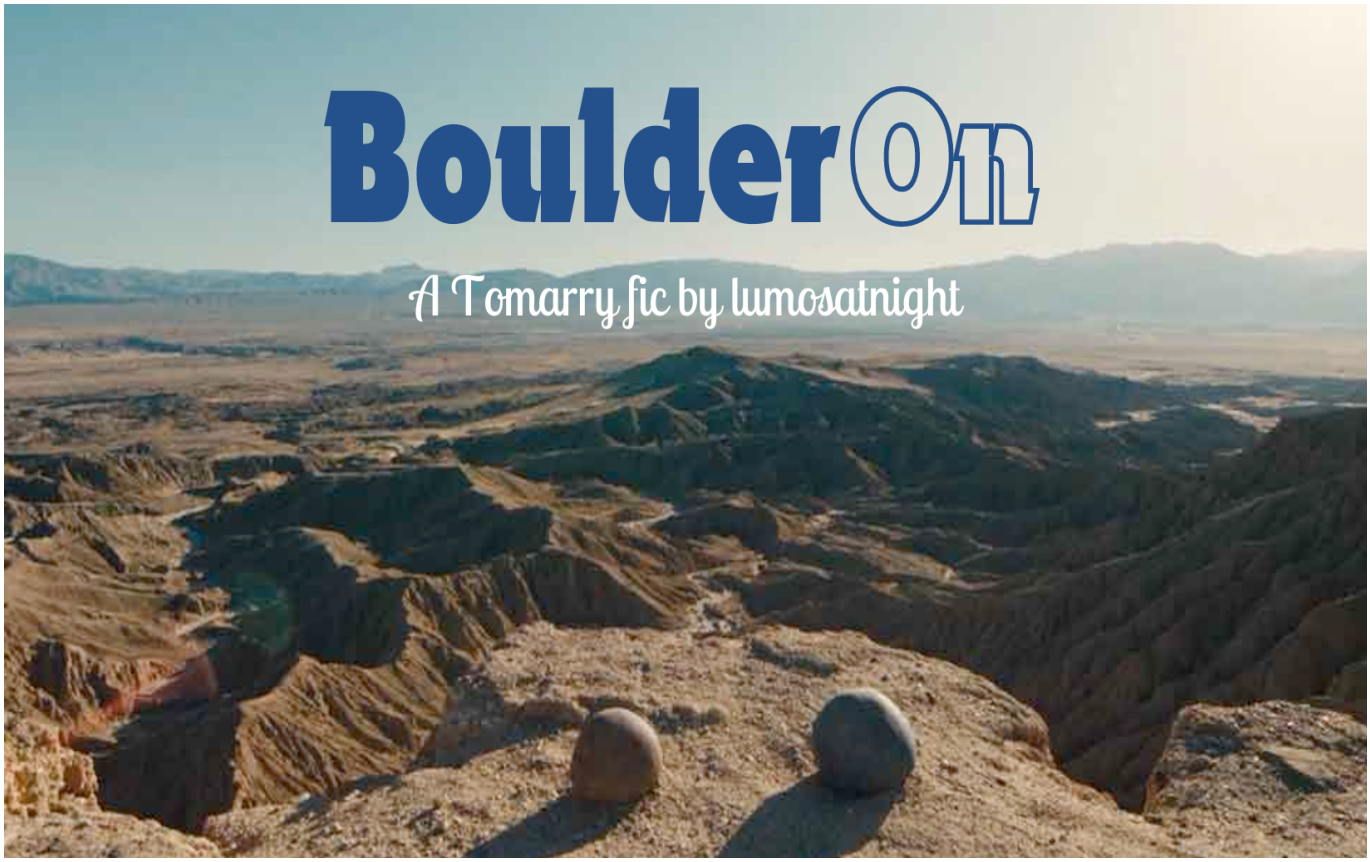
Summary

Two rocks, chillin' on a tall cliff, five feet apart 'cause they're not gay… or are they?

Notes

Vaguely based on the rock scene from Everything Everywhere All at Once (2022). Same vibes, different characters. Thank you TeaandSweaters for the beta!

See the end of the work for more notes



Imagine a place where no life exists. The skies are empty. The earth is barren and brown.

Now imagine two rocks, sitting side by side on a cliff overlooking the desert. There is nothing and no one to disrupt the peace.

It is just as Tom likes it.

Tom is the rock on the left: a hard weathered slab of reddish sandstone, smoothed to perfection by the rivers of time and persistence, at least a couple million years old. He has resided on the cliff for as long as he can remember — unchanging, unmoving, simply being.

Harry hates the silence.

Harry is the rock on the right: a jagged piece of greenish slate, young and naive and hopeful, maybe only a few thousand years old, if that. A few years ago, he rolled onto Tom's cliff and decided to stay. Tom was most displeased, but Harry didn't seem to mind.

The sun beats down on them both. Tom preens, soaking up its rays while Harry shrinks away from its attention. He's a strange one who Tom will never understand. They're rocks for goodness sake. It's what they do — they bask, they absorb, and they wait.

“Psssst,” says the Harry-rock, except he doesn’t have a mouth, so it’s more like a thought, a formless idea that drifts between the space between them. “I’m borrrrrreeed.”

The Tom-rock sighs, or the approximation of a sigh seeing as he also doesn’t have a mouth. Wait, is he even a *he* or an *it?* These are questions to ponder for another time perhaps but not in the middle of his afternoon preening.

“Then, be bored. But stop bothering me.”

“Tooooooom,” Harry whines, eroding Tom’s patience.

“Stop, just stop. You are ruining this perfectly lovely afternoon.”

“It’s always the same. Day after day. Year after year.”

“That’s the point,” says Tom.

“But it’s so borrring.” And now it sounds like Harry is pouting (if rocks could pout).

Tom ignores him for the remaining sunlight hours, but Harry’s words nag at him. It’s not something Tom likes to think about often — the reason for his existence. Because if he was made for some purpose, his purpose must be greater than this, surely, but he can never be too sure, and that thought haunts him.

Damn Harry, and damn his ramblings.

“What’s beyond the horizon?” Harry asks one afternoon as Tom lounges in the sun and Harry hides in the shade.

“I don’t know.”

“What’s between the dunes?”

“I don’t know.”

“What’s at the bottom of the cliffs?”

“I don’t know.”

“What if we found out?”

Tom looks at him (as best he can without eyes) to see if he’s serious or just skipping stones. “And how would we do that? We’re rocks.”

“I dunno,” says Harry. He would be shrugging if he had shoulders.

Tom turns his attention to the far side of the cliff, away from Harry and all of his ideas. “Leave me alone,” he says. “Everything was fine until you showed up. Everything was simple.” Boring, is what he doesn’t say.

“M’sorry,” says Harry, except he doesn’t sound that sorry.

Tom can feel him smirking (if rocks could smirk), which he ignores. It will take more than a young and curious rock to topple him. Tom has weathered many storms with nothing but his high density and grit.

“I’m going,” Harry announces one morning.

The skies are grey, the wind strong and unrelenting. This would normally be when Tom hunkers down, silent and waiting until the storm passes through. Instead, he says, “Where are you going?”

“Dunno. Somewhere. Anywhere. Everywhere.”

“Sounds stupid.”

“Maybe,” Harry acknowledges, “or maybe not. You never know until you try.”

Tom remains silent. He does get it (kind of) — the need to go somewhere else, to do something more.

“Will you come with me?” Harry scoots toward him, which is absolutely blasphemous. Rocks don’t move. Rocks get moved — by the wind, by the rivers, by the earth. They do not *move.*

“Stop that,” Tom scolds.

“Stop what?” Harry scoots closer another inch.

“I said stop that!”

Harry scoots another inch. He’s still decently far away, but not far enough. It won’t be long before he reaches Tom. Tom doesn’t know if he dreads it or welcomes it.

“Come with me,” pleads Harry.

“No.”

“Come with me, or I’ll make you.” He scoots another inch. It isn’t an idle threat, but Tom is no small rock. He would like to see Harry *try* and move him.

“How will you make me?” Tom is merely exploring all of his options. He isn’t curious or anything.

Harry inches closer. He’s almost on top of Tom now, as thrilling as that is. Tom hasn’t been this close to another rock in over 500 years.

“I…” Harry pauses dramatically “...will block all of your sunlight. All you will ever see is shade.”

Tom gasps. “You wouldn’t.”

“I would,” Harry promises solemnly.

This is the worst, Tom decides. Harry is the worst. He’s flicking Tom’s pebbles. He’s making it impossible to remain peacefully on the cliffside.

“Fine,” he hisses.

“Fine?”

“Yes, fine. I’ll go with you. Just leave me and my sunlight alone.”

Harry grins (the rocky version of a grin) and scoots the last couple of inches until he and Tom are touching, just the edges and nothing more.

“After you.” Harry nudges him.

“No way!” exclaims Tom. “How do I know you don’t just want the cliff for yourself? What will stop you from abandoning me as soon I jump?”

“Alright, alright. We’ll go together. I can’t trust you to follow me if I go first.”

Tom scowls because the thought did pass through his first few layers of sediment.

“On the count of three.”

It’s Tom’s last chance to back out, but he doesn’t.

“One…” says Harry.

“Two…” says Tom.

“Three…” they say.

Together, they fling themselves off the cliff and into the abyss. It’s the stupidest thing Tom has ever done, but at least he is not alone. He always has Harry.

End Notes

Tom is sandstone, a sedimentary rock, because he is resistant to many things including acid, heat, and weather but can be worn down eventually. He also has many layers that need to be chipped away at. Harry is slate, a metamorphic rock, because he was formed under pressure and is a little sharp when handling. He also thrives when he has a specific purpose (aka he likes to be useful).

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